



## (U) Life in the Big Apple

FROM: [REDACTED]  
(S//SI) Former NSA Rep to USUN and COS NY  
Run Date: 08/27/2004

FROM: [REDACTED]  
(S//SI) Former NSA Rep to USUN and COS NY

(S//SI) NSA has several customer representatives assigned to Manhattan serving major customers such as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, FBI New York and the Chief of New York Station. For operational reasons, our representatives are obliged to live and work in Manhattan, which has both positive and not-so-positive aspects.

(U) Life in Manhattan is just what you might expect: fast-paced, exciting, full of energy and packed with cultural opportunities. It's also hectic, crowded, noisy, frustrating, and hair-raising at times, particularly so since the attacks on 9/11.

(U) For me the charm of Manhattan is in its streets. Because cars are an expensive nuisance there, many people (me included) dispense with them altogether. I walked, took the bus, subway, train or water taxi everywhere I went. It was a great way to get around and to see New York neighborhoods, each with its distinct ethnic or cultural history. The shopping is, of course, world class. My midtown Manhattan apartment was only a twenty-minute walk from Bloomie's, the shops on Madison, Macy's, Bergdorf's and hundreds more. Broadway, Times Square and the Theater District were also a short 25-minute walk from my place, very convenient when the shows all finish at the same time, and you can't find a cab. Walking in Soho, the East Village, across the Brooklyn Bridge or farther uptown in that great green urban oasis Central Park, was an inexpensive and always entertaining pastime. It always seemed that there were street fairs, farmers' markets and flea markets to explore. And did I mention that my commute to work consisted of a five-minute walk across the street?

(U) New York nightlife, of course, needs no fanfare. You may choose from any variety of music, theater, dance or opera with venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Met, Broadway, Birdland or CBJB's, to name just a few. Of course, major-league sports venues range from Yankee Stadium and Shea to Madison Square Garden and Forest Hills. Most venues are an easy subway ride away. Actually, the biggest problem you face many nights is deciding which restaurant to choose (8000 in Manhattan alone!), ranging from good, cheap eats to world-class cuisine.

(S//SI) The downside for me was the expense and the noise. Living in Manhattan near the U.S. Mission to the UN was an operational necessity. The job required that I live within a 20-minute call-in distance from the office, which practically speaking, meant living in Midtown Manhattan. A modest one- or two-bedroom apartment in Midtown ranges anywhere from three to four times the cost of a similar place in the Maryland suburbs. Our current New York Rep enjoys a housing subsidy that covers about two-thirds of the housing cost, which is a significant improvement over years past



### SERIES:

#### (U) SID Around the World '04

1. [Letter From Ottawa](#)
2. [Yakima: Fertile Valley in the High Desert](#)
3. [Life in Alice](#)
4. [Omaha - The Heart of the Heartland](#)
5. [Life in the Big Apple](#)
6. ['Dropping Anchor' in Anchorage](#)

when there was no housing compensation. New York Reps also receive New York-scale compensation, which partially offsets the cost of living in Manhattan. Still, life ain't cheap in the Big Apple, especially for families. Also on the negative side, there is the ever-present cacophony of taxi horns, sirens and garbage trucks. As the old song goes, "New York is the city that never sleeps." Now I know why.

(U) Family and friends frequently expressed concerns about how safe it was to live and work in New York. Some worried about crime, others about terrorist attacks. As to crime, walking around Midtown day or night felt very safe. Even late at night, there are lots of people on the streets, which are well-lit and well-patrolled by New York's Finest.

(U) The terrorist threat is something we all live with whether in the Washington area, at Fort Meade and or in New York City. The news is full of security precautions and arrangements that New York is making in the face of the current perceived threats. It is certainly nerve-racking and intense at times to live in Manhattan, but 9/11 should teach us that we must all, New Yorkers and non-New Yorkers alike, learn to manage the risk in our lives.

(U) So, was the New York tour worth the long hours, financial stress, aggravation and anxiety? Absolutely! It was one of the best assignments I've had, and a highlight of my career. How could a chance to work at a challenging job in one of the most exciting places on earth be anything less?

---

(U//FOUO) If you are thinking of applying for a field position, see the [Field Vacancy Announcements](#).

**“(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DL sid comms](#)).”**